IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please AMEND claims 1, 3 and 6 in accordance with the following:

1.   (currently amended) A program product that helps service processes receive instructions from an operator, the program product causing a computer system to perform a process comprising the steps of:

(a)   upon issuance of an inquiry from a service process to the operator, storing the inquiry in an inquiry buffer;

(b)   in response to a first delivery request from a first client, retrieving the inquiry pending in the inquiry buffer and sending the retrieved inquiry to the first client over a network;

(c)   upon receipt of a reply from the first client, forwarding the received reply to the service process, as well as storing the received reply and corresdponding inquiry as a log record in a log memory; and

(d)   in response to a second delivery request from a second client on the network,consulting the log memory to retrieve log records of past replies that were made to inquiries about the same subject as a new pending inquiry stored in the inquiry buffer for delivery to the second client; and

(e) ~~Sending~~sending the second client the retrieved log records of past replies, together with the ~~New~~new pending inquiry directed to the second client.

2.   (original) The program product according to claim 1, wherein the first and second clients are implemented on a single computer platform.

3.   (currently amended) The program product according to claim 1, wherein:

the second delivery request contains search conditions for the log memory; and

said log record retrieving step (d) ~~only~~retrieves log records that match with the search conditions specified by the second client.

4.   (original) The program product according to claim 1, wherein:

the second delivery request from the second client requests delivery of a message log record; and

in response to the second delivery request for the message log record, said log record retrieving step (d) retrieves a log record and sends inquiry-related part of the retrieved log record to the second client.

5.   (original) The program product according to claim 1, wherein:

the second delivery request from the second client requests delivery of a reply log record; and

in response to the second delivery request for the reply log record, said log record retrieving step (d) retrieves a log record and sends reply-related part of the retrieved log record to the second client.

6.   (currently amended) The program product according to claim 5, wherein:

the second delivery request from the second client requests delivery of a reply log record associated with a particular inquiry; and

said log record retrieving step (d) only retrieves log records that match with the particular inquiry specified in the second delivery request and sends reply-related part of the retrieved log records to the second client.

7.   (original) The program product according to claim 1, wherein the inquiries sent at said inquiry sending step (b) include a list of possible answers to one of the inquiries.

8.   (cancelled)

9.   (original) The program product according to claim 1, further comprising the step of notifying the service process of cancellation of the pending inquiry if there is no reply to the pending inquiry within a specified timeout period.

10.   (original) The program product according to claim 9, wherein:

the timeout period is specified in the pending inquiry sent at said inquiry sending step (b); and

said notifying step notifies the service process of cancellation when expiration time of the pending inquiry is reached, the expiration time being calculated by adding the specified timeout

period to issuance time of the pending inquiry.

11.   (original) The program product according to claim 10, wherein:

the timeout period is indirectly specified by a timeout period identifier of the pending inquiry; and

said notifying step calculates the expiration time with reference to a predefined timeout period table that associates a plurality of timeout period identifiers with corresponding timeout periods.

12.   (original) The program product according to claim 1, further comprising the step of dispatching a command upon receipt of the reply to the pending inquiry, wherein the command is previously associated with the pending inquiry so as to initiate a particular processing task related thereto.

13.   (original) The program product according to claim 12, wherein said command dispatching step adds the received reply as a parameter of the command to be dispatched.

14.   (previously presented) A method that helps service processes receive instructions from an operator, the method comprising the steps of:

(a)   upon issuance of an inquiry from a service process to the operator, storing the inquiry in an inquiry buffer;

(b)   in response to a first delivery request from a first client, retrieving the inquiry pending in the inquiry buffer and sending the retrieved inquiry to the first client over a network;

(c)   upon receipt of a reply from the first client, forwarding the received reply to the service process, as well as storing the received reply and corresponding inquiry as a log record in a log memory; and

(d)   in response to a second delivery request from a second client on the network, consulting the log memory to retrieve log records of past replies that were made to inquiries about the same subject as a new pending inquiry stored in the inquiry buffer for delivery to the second client; and

(e)   sending the second client the retrieved log records of past replies, together with the new pending inquiry directed to the second client.

15.   (previously presented) An apparatus that helps service processes receive instructions from an operator, comprising:

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an inquiry buffer that stores inquiries;

a log memory that stores records of past inquiries and corresponding replies;

an inquiry receiver that receives an inquiry from the service processes and stores the received inquiry in said inquiry buffer;

an inquiry message sender, responsive to a first delivery request from a first client, which retrieves the inquiry pending in said inquiry buffer and sends the retrieved inquiry to the first client over a network;

a reply message receiver, responsive to a reply received from the first client, which forwards the received reply to the service process, as well as storing the received reply and corresponding inquiry as a log record in said log memory; and

a log record sender, responsive to a second delivery request from a second client on the network, whichconsults the log memory to retrieve log records of past replies that were made to inquiries about the same subject as a new pending inquiry stored in the inquiry buffer for delivery to the second client and sends the second client the retrieved log records of past replies, together with the new pending inquiry directed to the second client.

16.   (previously presented) A computer-readable storage medium storing a program that helps service processes receive instructions from an operator, the program causing a computer system to perform a process comprising the steps of:

(a)   upon issuance of an inquiry from a service process to the operator, storing the inquiry in an inquiry buffer;

(b)   in response to a first delivery request from a first client, retrieving the inquiry pending in the inquiry buffer and sending the retrieved inquiry to the first client over a network;

(c)   upon receipt of a reply from the first client, forwarding the received reply to the serrice process, as well as storing the received reply and corresponding inquiry as a log record in a log memory; and

(d)   in response to a second delivery request from a second client on the network, , consulting the log memory to retrieve log records of past replies that were made to inquiries about the same subject as a new pending inquiry stored in the inquiry buffer for delivery to the second client; and

(e) sending the second client the retrieved log records of past replies, together with the new pending inquiry directed to the second client.

17.   (original) An apparatus that helps service processes receive instructions from an

operator, comprising:

inquiry buffer means for storing inquiries;

log memory means for storing records of past inquiries and corresponding replies;

inquiry receiving means for receiving an inquiry from the service processes and stores the received inquiry in said inquiry buffer means;

inquiry message sending means, responsive to a first delivery request from a first client, for retrieving the inquiry pending in said inquiry buffer means and sending the retrieved inquiry to the first client over a network;

reply message receiving means, responsive to a reply received from the first client, for forwarding the received reply to the service process and storing the received reply and corresponding inquiry as a log record in said log memory means; and

log record sending means, responsive to a second delivery request from a second client on the network, for retrieving log records from said log memory means and sending the retrieved log records to the second client.